



getting used to silence

"this stillness is purifying.

strange as it may seem, the outer quietude quickly reveals the inner restlessness.

what am i going to do when there is nothing to do?

what am i going to do when there is no one demanding my attention

or inviting me to do something ?

or making me feel valuable?...

silence and solitude call me to detach myself from the scaffolding of daily life and to discover if anything there can stand on its own

when the traditional support systems have been pulled away"

henri nouwen

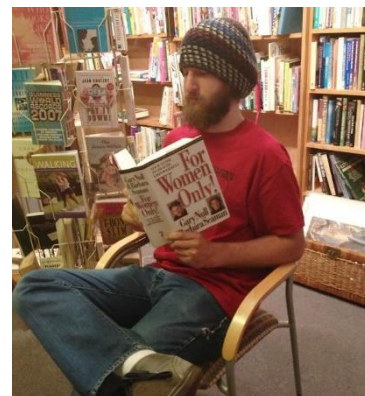
Silence Practice One:

Find a comfortable place with or without another ...

and give yourself all afternoon to read

something you have been putting off reading

for a long time.



Silence Practice Two:

Fast from words – all words.

Exercise your right brain for half a day.

No reading, no writing, no speaking

Sketch. Mould clay. Pray a collage. Gaze.

No listening to speaking or singing. Gaze.

Play the piano. Do a jigsaw. Gaze.

No crosswords, no sudoku, no poetry.

Gaze.



Silence Practice Three:
Leave your cell-phone inside
Go outside
Open your hands
Fill with sunlight
Listen as you wait for nothing in particular

Now you might plead overcast skies as an excuse not to try this... or cold... or rain... or snow ... Understood! Do take care of yourself.... Just know that the truly amazing thing about this practice is that it works even without sunlight and even if you are indoors (though it has a special resonance outside). Your job is only to open your hands - no grasping objects or fears or worries or whatever... if you open your hands and wait without specific expectation your heart and mind and spirit open like a window to a spring day ... and the blessings will come of their own accord.... seemingly serendipitous... beautiful...surprising and delightful....

Adapted from "Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer" C.S. Lewis (Mariner 2002).

Silence Practice Four:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Using this prayer as a focal point, say the words repeatedly until the prayer moves from your head into your heart and you connect with the Presence already praying ceaselessly within.

For five minutes, for fifty.

Note: Think of sin as a breach of relationship with and trust in God rather than your crazy misguided acts or omissions.

Silence Practice Five:

- 1) Take your cellphone outside and engage the camera function. (Ignore all other uses of your phone!)
- 2) Wander, walk, sit ... and ask God to show you something. Wait on God; let something catch your attention. . . a pattern, a creature, a raindrop. You might notice lots of things - enjoy!
- 3) Choose the one that invites you most – photograph it.
- 4) Be still and settle.
- 5) Use the *Lectio divina* sequence to pray with the photo of the image that resonated or shimmered.

(Is this *Photo divina*?!)

‘Read’ it. Reflect. Respond. Rest.

The fruit of silence is prayer.
The fruit of prayer is faith.
The fruit of faith is love.
The fruit of love is service.
The fruit of service is peace.

Mother Teresa of Kolkata.



... a Kolkata canal-scape ...